

## FORM B – BUILDING

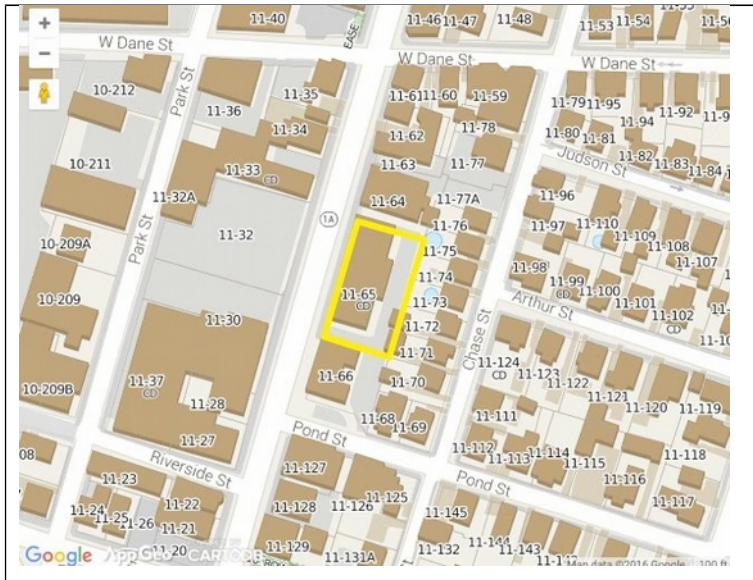
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



West (façade) and south elevations

Locus Map (north at top)



Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
11-65-309	Salem		BEV. 1130

**Town/City:** Beverly

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):  
Downtown

**Address:** 309-321 Rantoul Street

**Historic Name:** Crosby Block

**Uses:** Present: commercial and residential

Original: commercial and residential

**Date of Construction:** 1899

**Source:** Dept. of Public Safety Records

**Style/Form:** Classical Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Walter H. Kilham, architect;  
Forman A. Crosby, contractor

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: brick with brick and granite trim

Roof: membrane

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
none

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):  
Modern storefronts and replacement sash (late 20<sup>th</sup> c)

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** approx. 1 acre

**Setting:** Located on a main thoroughfare in a predominantly commercial and light industrial area. Densely built residential area located in blocks to east between Rantoul and Cabot streets.

**Recorded by:** Wendy Frontiero and Pamela Hartford

**Organization:** Beverly Historic District Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): September 2016

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

BEVERLY

309-321 RANTOUL STREET

Area(s) Form No.

BEV. 1130

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The Crosby Block occupies a flat rectangular lot on the east side of Rantoul Street, approximately halfway between Pond and West Dane streets. The parcel is bordered by a small, two story, wood frame commercial structure on the south, which appears to date from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and a bulky, three story, wood frame residential building from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century on the north.

The large, rectangular building is set directly on the sidewalk edge of Rantoul Street and has narrow, paved setbacks on each side. The Crosby Block rises four stories to a very shallow pitched, shed roof that slopes down to the back. Walls are clad with an orange-glazed brick on the Rantoul Street façade and common red brick on the side elevations, in a running bond pattern; the side walls have a header course every eight row. Windows are modern replacement sash with a pair of sliding windows topped by a glazed transom, all trimmed by rock-faced granite sills. Rectangular window openings feature similar rock-faced granite lintels, while segmentally arched window openings culminate in arched brick lintels. The upper level sash appear originally to have been 6/2 double hung units on the Rantoul Street façade and 2/2 on the side elevations.

The ornamental façade features storefronts at the base, banded brick at the north and south corners, and a corbelled brick cornice at the low parapet; an historic photo (1905 directory) shows a molded wood cornice (not extant) surmounting the corbelling. The storefront level presently displays a continuous, stucco and metal entablature, brick piers, six modern storefronts, and three slightly recessed entrances with single leaf doors and arched openings embellished with paneled brick archivols. The 1905 photograph shows three-bay storefronts on the interior four bays, featuring a recessed entry in the center, 2/1 storefront windows to each side, and horizontal windows in the raised basement. The upper floors contain 16 bays of single and loosely paired windows; the paired windows are set within four slightly recessed bays having segmentally arched and corbelled tops and paneled brick spandrels. Window openings are rectangular on the second and third floors and segmentally arched on the fourth floor.

The asymmetrical side elevations each contain five bays of windows, with the second and third bays in from the street being loosely paired. All window openings on the side elevations are segmentally arched. The ground level windows are set high above grade and are presently infilled with brick. A utilitarian entrance with a single-leaf, modern glass and metal door has been inserted in the center of the first floor on each side elevation.

The Crosby Block is a handsome, well-preserved example of mixed-use development from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Major alterations include the modern storefronts and replacement window sash. The building is distinguished by its large scale; use of orange brick, varied window opening shapes, and recessed bays on the façade; and decorative masonry trim.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

The Crosby Block exemplifies the industrialization along Rantoul and Park streets in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when shoemaking and the manufacture of shoemaking machinery were prominent, along with the need to house and service the influx of workers who came to work in the factories. A street railway was installed along Rantoul Street in 1907, facilitating workers' commutes to factories and shops throughout the area.

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Constructed in 1899, the Crosby Block was erected by Forman A. Crosby (1859-1947), a prominent builder in Beverly during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1897, the land was owned by William Stoddard, and its two large wood frame buildings were occupied by Beverly Manufacturing Company. Crosby bought the land between 1897 and 1899, when the present building appears to have been erected; he featured a photograph of the four-story commercial/residential block in an advertisement in the 1905 city directory. The ad describes Crosby as a mason, contractor and builder, offering "STEAM DERRICK WORK", "Particular attention given to Open Fire-Places", and "Antique Designs a Specialty" (1905 Directory: 107)

Crosby was born in Canada and emigrated to the U.S. in 1875; he is buried in Central Cemetery in downtown Beverly. In 1900, Crosby and his wife Ann lived several blocks away at 7 Judson Street with their five children; Crosby's occupation was described as contractor/mason.

An early 20<sup>th</sup> century pamphlet on the history and leading businesses of Beverly contains the following entry for F. A. Crosby:

"Among the many builders and contractors of Essex County, none have a superior reputation to F. A. Crosby, 7 Judson street, for reliability, close calculation and excellence of work performed. Contract work in stone and brick, plastering and repairing is executed promptly and every agreement carried out. From 15 to 60 skilled tradesmen are employed. Mr. Crosby was born in Yarmouth, N. S., in 1859, and there educated. He has had a long and honorable business career, always in connection with stone and brick work, and became established here in February, 1885. Mr. Crosby is the builder and owner of the handsome Crosby block on Rantoul street. He is a member of the Odd Fellow, A. O. U. W., and is councilman from Ward 3. Mr. Crosby also manufactures and sells at 155 Rantoul street harness of all kinds and deals extensively in horse clothing and stable furnishings ("Beverly Souvenir, "Beverly: Past and Present": 15-16).

Since its construction, the Crosby Block has been occupied by a variety of commercial operations on the ground floor and apartments above. Businesses operating here between 1905 and 1965 included grocery and provisions, shoe store, plumber and stove dealer, harness maker, furniture, men's clothing, apothecary, bakery, hardware, liquors, and cafes; the Works Progress Administration Division of Surplus Commodities was located here in 1940. Residents during that time period were typically lower middle-class, white and blue collar workers. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many were in the shoe industry, including shoemaker, shoe cutter, and sole sorter. Other representative occupations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century included carpenter, clerk, bookkeeper, meat cutter, fireman, electrician, painter, printer, mechanic, laborer, cook, and factory worker. Many households were headed by single women; retirees became prominent in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1987, the building was renovated and converted into a commercial and residential condominium; David Jacquith of Beverly was the architect. At this time, the interior was gutted, new storefronts were installed, and parking was provided in a carport at the basement level.

The Department of Public Safety records show construction of the building in 1899 and list W. H. Kilham as the architect. A native of Beverly, Walter H. Kilham (1868-1948) was graduated from the architecture department of MIT, studied for two years in Europe with a Rotch Traveling Scholarship, and opened his own office in Boston in 1898. In 1900 he took James C. Hopkins (1873-1938) as a partner; later partners resulted in the firm's name changing to Kilham, Hopkins, and Greeley in 1925, and Kilham, Hopkins, Greeley, and Brodie in 1945. The firm's extensive practice was known for its private homes, churches, educational buildings, and other public buildings throughout Massachusetts, as well as its interest in low-cost housing and progressive design theories. Kilham was also well respected in his time for his architectural history, *Boston After Bulfinch* (1946), which spanned the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

MACRIS contains 156 properties under the name of Kilham, with significant numbers in Beverly (nine), Boston, Brookline, and Salem. In Beverly, Kilham's major works include a chapel addition to the Washington Street Congregational Church (1891; BEV.129), the Hardy School (1898; BEV.273), the Beverly Farms School (1904; BEV.230), Hose House #2 (1905; BEV.73; NR 1986), a shoe factory on Rantoul Street for the Beverly Building Association (1906), and substantial renovations to the Charles Torrey House (45 Neptune Street, Beverly Cove; 1910; BEV.207).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Back Bay Houses; Genealogies of Back Bay Houses. "Walter Harrington Kilham". <https://backbayhouses.org/walter-harrington-kilham>. Accessed 3 May 2016.

Beverly city directories, 1893 – 1965.

*Continuation sheet 2*

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Beverly Historical Society Archives. "Beverly Souvenir. Beverly: Past and Present". Pamphlet at Beverly Historical Society; hand-labelled "circa 1903-4".

City of Beverly, Building Inspector's Office. Building permit records.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Department of Public Safety records. F. A. Crosby Building, 167-76 Rantoul Street.

Find A Grave. "Find A Grave; Forman A. Crosby". <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>. Accessed 9 May 2016.

Hepler, Margaret. *Beverly; Historic Cultural Resources Survey, 1992-93; Final Report*. June 1993.

Historic maps and atlases: 1897 (George H. Walker)

Massachusetts Historical Commission, Form B, Beals-Stedman-Naples Area, Brookline, BKL.BQ update.

Morgan, Keith N., ed. *Buildings of Massachusetts*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

National Register nomination form for Hose House #2, Beverly, Mass.

U.S. Federal Census, 1900.

## National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district
- ☐ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by Wendy Frontiero

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Crosby Block is significant for its associations with the historical development of Beverly during a period of intense industrial and population growth at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Crosby Block exemplifies the industrialization along Rantoul and Park streets in downtown Beverly in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when shoemaking and the manufacture of shoemaking machinery were prominent, along with the need to house and service the influx of workers who came to work in the factories. The building is associated with an important local builder/developer, Forman Crosby and with an eminent architect, Walter Kilham, who was born in Beverly and practiced in the Boston firm of Kilham and Hopkins.

A large building that is prominently located on a major downtown thoroughfare, the Crosby Block is a handsome, well-preserved example of mixed-use development in a Classical Revival style. The building is distinguished by its large scale; use of orange brick, varied window opening shapes, and recessed bays on the façade; and decorative masonry trim. Retaining integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, the Crosby Block is recommended for listing in the National Register with significance at the local level under Criteria A and C.